The PRICE

By FRANCIS LYNDE

ILLUSTRATIONS by C.D. RHODES

CHAPTER XXX—Continued.

—15—

"Margery," he began, when the interval of thoughtful heart-searching had done its illuminative work, "what would you say if I should tell you that your 'some day' has already come?"

She started as if he had thrust a knife into her. Then she slipped out of his arms and caught up his hand to press it against her cheek.

"I should say, 'Whatsoever seemeth good in the eyes of my dear lord, so let it be.'"

"But think a moment, girl; if one has done wrong, there must be atonement. That is the higher law—the highest law—and no man may evade it. Do you know what that would mean for me?"

"It is the Price, boy, dear; I don't ask you to pay it. Listen: My father and I have agreed to disagree, and he has turned over to me a lot of money that he took from—that was once my mother's brother's share in the Colorado gold claims. What is mine is yours. We can pay back the money. Will that do?"

He was shaking his head slowly. "No," he said, "I think it wouldn't do."

"I was afraid it wouldn't," she sighed, "but I had to try. Are they still gnashing their teeth at you?—the dreadful things, I mean?"

He did not answer in words, but she knew, and held her peace. At the end of the ends he sprang up suddenly and drew her to her feet.

"I can't do it, Margery, girl! I can't ask you to wait—and afterward to marry a convict! Think of it—even if Galbraith were willing to withdraw, the law wouldn't let him, and I'd get the limit; anything from seven years to fifteen or more. Oh, my God, no! I can't pay the price! I can't give you up!"

She put her arms around his neck and drew his head down and kissed him on the lips. "I'll wait . . . oh, boy, boy! I'll wait! But I can neither push you over the edge nor hold you back. Only don't think of me; please, please don't think of me!—'Whatsoever seemeth good'—that is what you must think of; that is my last word: 'Whatsoever seemeth good.'" And she pushed him from her and fled.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Desert and the Sown.

Through streets in which the village quiet of the summer night was undisturbed save by the spattering tinkle of the lawn sprinklers in the front yards, and the low voices of the outdoor people taking the air and the moonlight on the porches, Griswold fared homeward, the blood pounding in his veins and the fine wine of life mounting headily to his brain.

After all the dubious stumblings he had come to the end of the road, to find awaiting him the great accusation and the great reward. By the unanswerable logic of results, in its effect upon others and upon himself, his deed had proved itself a crime. Right or wrong in the highest ethical fields, the accepted social order had proved itself strong enough to make its own laws and to prescribe the far-reaching penalties for their infraction. Under these laws he stood convicted. Never again, save through the gate of atonement, could he be reinstated as a soldier in the ranks of the conventionally righteous. True, the devotion of a loving woman, aided by a train of circumstances strikingly fortuitous and little short of miraculous, had averted the final price-paying in penal retribution. But the fact remained. He was a felon.

Into this gaping wound which might otherwise have slain him had been poured the wine and oil of a great love; a love so clean and pure in its own well-springs that it could perceive no wrong in its object; could measure no act of loyal devotion by any standard save that of its own greatness. This love asked nothing but what he chose to give. It would accept him either as he was, or as he ought to be. The place he should elect to occupy would be its place; his standards its standards.

Just here the reasoning angel opened a door and thrust him out upon the edge of a precipice and left him to look down into the abyss of the betrayers—the pit of those whose gift and curse it is to be the pace setters. In a flash of revealment it was shown him that with the great love had come a great responsibility. Where he should lead, Margery would follow, unshrinkingly, unquestioningly; never asking whether the path led up or down; asking only that his path might be hers. Instantly he was face to face with a fanged police which threatened to tear his heart out and trample upon it; and again he recorded his decision, confirming it with an oath. The price was too great; the upward path too steep; the self-denial it entailed too sacrificial.

"We have but one life to live, and we'll live it together, Margery, girl, for better or for worse," was his apostrophic declaration, made while he was turning into Shawnee street a few doors from his lodgings; and a minute later he was opening the Widow Holcomb's gate.

The house was dark and apparently deserted as to its street-fronting half when he let himself in at the gate and ran quickly up the steps. The front door was open, and he remembered afterward that he had wondered how the careful widow had come to leave it so, and why the hall lamp was not lighted. From the turn at the stairhead he felt his way to the door of his study. Like the one below, it was wide open; but someone had drawn the window shades and the interior of the room was as dark as a cavern.

Once, in the novel-writing, following the lead of many worthy predecessors, Griswold had made much of the "sixth" sense; the subtle and indefinable prescience which warns its possessor of invisible danger. No such warning was vouchsafed him when he leaned across the end of the writing table, turned on the gas and held a lighted match over the chimney of the working-lamp. It was while he was still bending over the table, with both hands occupied, that he looked aside. In his own pivot chair, covering him with the mate to the weapon he had smashed and thrown away, sat the man who had opened the two doors and drawn the window shades and otherwise prepared the trap.

"You bought a couple o' these little playthings, Mr. Griswold," said the man quietly. "Keep your hands right where they are, and tell in which pocket you've got the other one."

Griswold laughed, and there was a sudden snapping of invisible bonds. He dismissed instantly the thought that Charlotte Farnham had taken him at his word; and if she had not, there was nothing to fear.

"I threw the other one away a little while ago," he said. "Reach your free hand over and feel my pockets."

Broffin acted upon the suggestion promptly.

"You ain't got it on you, anyway," he conceded; and when Griswold had dropped into the chair at the table's end: "I reckon you know what I'm here for."

"I know that you are holding that gun of mine at an exceedingly uncomfortable angle—for me," was the cool rejoinder. "I've always had a squeamish horror of being shot in the stomach."

The detective's grin was appreciative.

"You've got a good, cold nerve, anyway," he commented. "I've been puttin' it up that when the time came, you'd throw a fit o' some sort—what?"

"Put Them on," He Snapped.

Since you're clothed in your right mind, we'll get down to business. First, I'll ask you to hand over the key to that safety-deposit box you've got in Mr. Grierson's bank."

Griswold took his bunch of keys from his pocket, slipped the one that was asked for from the ring, and gave it to his captor.

"Of course I'm surrendering it under protest," he said. "You haven't yet told me who you are, or what you are holding me up for."

Broffin waved the formalities aside with a pistol-pointed gesture. "We can skip all that. I've got you dead to rights, after so long a time, and I'm goin' to take you back to New Orleans with me. The only question is, do you go easy or hard?"

"I don't go either way until you show your authority."

"I don't need any authority. You're the parlor anarchist that held up the president of the Bayou State Security bank last spring and made a get-away with a hundred thousand—what?"

"All right; you say so—prove it." Griswold had taken a cigar from the open box on the writing table and was calmly lighting it. There was nothing to be nervous about. "I'm waiting," he went on, placidly, when the cigar was going. "If you are an officer, you probably have a warrant, or a requisition, or something of that sort. Show it up."

"I don't need any papers to take you," was the barked-out retort. Broffin had more than once found himself confronting similar dead walls, and he knew the worth of a bold play.

"Oh, yes, you do. You accuse me of a crime; did you see me commit the crime?"

"No."

"Well, somebody did, I suppose. Bring on your witnesses. If anybody can identify me as the man you are after, I'll go with you—without the requisition. That's fair, isn't it?"

"I know you're the man, and you know it, too, d——n well!" snapped Broffin, angered into bandying words with his obstinate capture.

"That is neither here nor there; I am not affirming or denying. It is for you to prove your case, if you can. And, listen, Mr. Broffin—perhaps it will save your time and mine if I add that I happen to know that you can't prove your case."

"Why can't I?"

"Just because you can't," Griswold went on argumentatively. "I know the facts of this robbery you speak of; a great many people know them. The newspaper accounts said at the time that there were three persons who could certainly identify the robber—the president, the paying teller, and a young woman. It so happens that all three of these people are at present in Wahaska. At different times you have appealed to each of them, and in each instance you have been turned down. Isn't that true?"

Broffin glanced up, scowling.

"It's true enough that you—you and the little black-eyed girl between you—have hoodooed the whole bunch!" he rasped. "But when I get you into court, you'll find that there are others."

Griswold smiled good-naturedly. "That is a bold, bad bluff, Mr. Broffin, and nobody knows it any better than you do," he countered. "You haven't a leg to stand on. This is America, and you can't arrest me without a warrant. And if you could, what would you do with me without the support of at least one of your three witnesses? Nothing—nothing at all."

Broffin laid the pistol on the table, and put the key of the safety box beside it. Then he sat in grim silence for a full minute, toying idly with a pair of handcuffs which he had taken from his pocket.

"By the eternal grapples!" he said, at length, half to himself, "I've a good mind to do it anyway—and take the chances."

As quick as a flash Griswold thrust out his hands.

"Put them on!" he snapped. "There are a hundred lawyers in New Orleans who wouldn't ask for anything better than the chance to defend me—at your expense!"

Broffin dropped the manacles into his pocket and sat back in the swing-chair. "You win," he said shortly; and the battle was over.

For a little time no word was spoken. Griswold smoked on placidly, seemingly forgetful of the detective's presence. Yet he was the one who was the first to break the strained silence.

"You are a game fighter, Mr. Broffin," he said, "and I'm enough of a scrapper myself to be sorry for you. Try one of these smokes—you'll find them fairly good—and excuse me for a few minutes. I want to write a letter which, if you are going down town, perhaps you'll be good enough to mail for me."

He pushed the open box of cigars across to the detective, and dragged the lounging chair around to the other side of the table. There was stationery at hand, and he wrote rapidly for a few minutes, covering three pages of the manuscript sheets before he stopped. When the letter was inclosed, addressed, and stamped, he tossed it across to Broffin, face up. The detective saw the address, "Miss Margery Grierson," and, putting the letter into his pocket, got up to go.

"Just one minute more, if you please," said Griswold, and, relighting the cigar which had been suffered to go out, he went into the adjoining bedroom. When he came back, he had put on a light top coat and a soft hat, and was carrying a small handbag.

"I'm your man, Mr. Broffin," he said quietly. "I'll go with you—and plead guilty as charged."

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Wahaska, the village-conscious, had its nine-days' wonder displayed for it in inch-type headlines when the Daily Wahaskan, rehearsing the story of the New Orleans bank robbery, told of the voluntary surrender of the robber, and of his deportation to the southern city to stand trial for his offense.

Some few there were who took exceptions to Editor Randolph's editorial in the same issue, commenting on the surrender, and pleading for a suspension of judgment on the ground that much might still be hoped for from a man who had retraced a broad step in the downward path by voluntarily accepting the penalty. Those who objected to the editorial were of the perverse minority. The intimation was made that the plea had been inspired—a hint basing itself upon the fact that Miss Grierson had been seen visiting the office of the Wahaskan after the departure of the detective, Matthew Broffin, with his prisoner.

The sensational incident, however, had been forgotten long before a certain evening, three weeks later, when the Grierson carriage conveyed the convalescent president of the Bayou State Security from the Grierson mansion to the south-bound train. Andrew Galbraith was not alone in the carriage, and possibly there were those in the sleeping car who mistook the dark-eyed and strikingly beautiful young woman, who took leave of him only after he was comfortably settled in his section, for his daughter. But the whispered words of leave-taking were rather those of a confidante than a kinswoman.

"I'll arrange the Raymer matter as you suggest," she said, "and if I had even a speaking acquaintance with God, I'd pray for you the longest day I live, Uncle Andrew. And about the trial: I'm going to leave it all with you! Just remember that I shall bleed little drops of blood for every day the judge gives him, and that the only way he can be helped is by a short sentence. He wouldn't take a pardon; he—he wants to pay, you know. Good-night, and good-by!" And she put her strong young arms around Andrew Galbraith's neck and kissed him, thereby convincing the family party in lower seven that she was not only the only man's daughter, but a very affectionate one, at that.

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The little-changing seasons of central Louisiana had measured two complete rounds on the yearly dial of time's unremitting and unhasting clock when the best hired carriage that Baton Rouge could afford drew up before the entrance to the state's prison and waited. Precisely on the stroke of

"And You—You've Paid the Price, Haven't You?"

twelve, a man for whom the prison rules had lately been relaxed sufficiently to allow his hair to grow, came out, looked about him as one dazed, and assaulted the closed door of the carriage as if he meant to tear it from its hinges.

"Oh, boy, boy!" came from the one who had waited; and then the carriage door yielded, opened, closed with a crash, and the negro driver clucked to his horses.

They were half-way to the railroad station, and she was trying to persuade him that there would be months and years in which to make up for the loveless blank, before sane speech found its opportunity. And even then there were interruptions.

"I knew you'd be here; no, they didn't tell me, but I knew it—I would have staked my life on it, Margery, girl," he said, in the first lucid interval.

"And you—you've paid the Price, haven't you, Kenneth? But, oh, boy, dear! I've paid it, too! Don't you believe me?"

There was another interruption, and because the carriage windows were open, the negro driver grinned and confided a remark to his horses. Then the transgressor began again.

"Where are you taking me, Margery?—not that it makes any manner of difference."

"We are going by train to New Orleans, and this—this—very—evening we are to be married, in Mr. Galbraith's house. And Uncle Andrew is going to give the bride away. It's all arranged."

"And after?"

"Afterward, we are going away—I don't know where. I just told dear old Saint Andrew to buy the tickets to anywhere he thought would be nice, and we'd go. I don't care where it is—do you? And when we get there, I'll buy you a pen and some ink and paper, and you'll go on writing the book, just as if nothing had happened. Say you will, boy, dear; please say you will! And then I'll know that—the price—wasn't—too great."

He was looking out of the carriage window when he answered her, across to the levee and beyond it, to the farther shore of the great river, and his eyes were the eyes of a man who has seen of the travail of his soul and is satisfied.

"I shall never write that book, little girl. That story, and all the mistakes that were going to the making of it, lie on the other side of—the Price. But one day, please God, there shall be another and a worthier one."

"Yes—please God," she said; and the dark eyes were shining softly.

THE END.

Parrot Called Police.

A Philadelphia parrot screamed so that the police entered the house and found the mistress dead from drinking poison. "Get out!" wailed the parrot, when told what had happened.

THE EUROPEAN WAR A YEAR AGO THIS WEEK

Dec. 20, 1914.

Von Hindenburg advanced further toward Warsaw.

Russians crossed the Bzura burning the bridges.

Serbians and Montenegrins again invaded Bosnia.

Turks made gains near Lake Urumiah.

Allied fleets bombarded interior forts of the Dardanelles.

Russians drove Turks toward Van.

Belgian provinces agreed to pay tax to Germany.

Dec. 21, 1914.

Allies extended offensive operations in west, gaining in center.

Russians won over Turks in Armenia, capturing equipment.

Allied aviators dropped bombs in Brussels and made night attack near Ostend.

Chile protested against violations of her neutrality by German navy.

Germans driven across border of North Poland.

Dec. 22, 1914.

Germans claimed to have stopped allies in west.

Germans accused of shelling hospital in Ypres.

Russian army threatened railway to Thorn and Germans reformed to protect it.

Von Hindenburg's left threatened by new invasion of Germany.

Germans crossed branches of Bzura and Rawka rivers.

Austrians defeated in the Carpathians.

Arabs menaced Christians in Hodeida and French consul was seized.

Allied fleets bombarded German positions on Belgian coast.

French destroyer shelled Turks.

Allied fleets shelled Kilid Bahr.

Many Austrian soldiers killed in troop train accident.

Dec. 23, 1914.

Allies made slight gains in west.

Austrians defeated in southern Galicia.

Portuguese retreated before the Germans in Angola, Africa.

Turkish army left Damascus and marched on Suez canal.

Russian destroyers in Black sea bombarded Turkish villages.

King of Belgians sent message of thanks to Americans.

Dec. 24, 1914.

British using new howitzers in west; French artillery demolishes German trenches.

French cruiser damaged by Austrian torpedo.

French submarine sunk by Austrian shore batteries.

German aviator dropped bomb in Dover.

Germany denied French charge of hiring neutral ships to lay mines in Mediterranean.

Dec. 25, 1914.

Unofficial Christmas along much of the western front, the allies and Germans in some instances exchanging gifts and visits.

French shelled the outer forts of Metz.

Civilians of East Prussia began movement toward interior of province.

Russo-Turkish operations were stopped by intense cold.

Two German aviators flew up the Thames.

Dec. 26, 1914.

British made naval and air attack on German fleet without important results.

Zeppelin dropped bombs in Nancy, German aeroplanes made raid in Russian Poland and French aviators attacked Metz.

Fighting in Flanders was halted by dense fog.

Russians made gains in the south.

French attacked Austrian naval base at Pola in the Adriatic.

Germany notified neutral nations their consuls in Belgium would not be recognized further.

Unqualifiedly False.

"Skinner boasts that he never lets anybody get ahead of him—that he takes nobody's dust." "Skinner's a falsifier; he takes everybody's dust he can lay his hands on."—Boston Transcript.

Driven to Desperation.

"I am so tired of being conventional and customary and correct," stated H. H. Harsh, "that one of these days I shall stop right in front of a church and in a firm voice ejaculate 'Drat!'"—Kansas City Star.

His Opinion of Brown.

Smart Young Man—"What do you think of Brown?" Indignant Old Gentleman—"Brown, sir! He is one of those people that pat you on the back before your face, and hit you in the eye behind your back!"—Tit-Bits.

True Happiness.

To watch the corn grow and the blossom set, to draw hard breath over plowshare and spade, to read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray—these are the things to make man happy.—Ruskin.

HANDICRAFT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

By A. NEELY HALL and DOROTHY PERKINS

A TOY CRANE.

This little crane travels along an elevated track supported at its ends upon the tops of chair backs (Fig. 1).

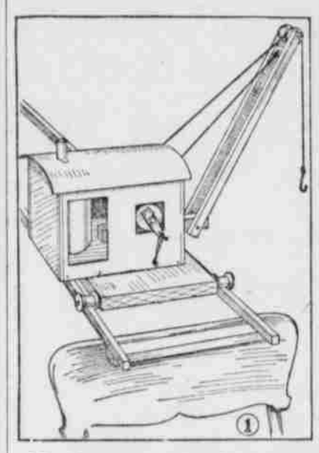
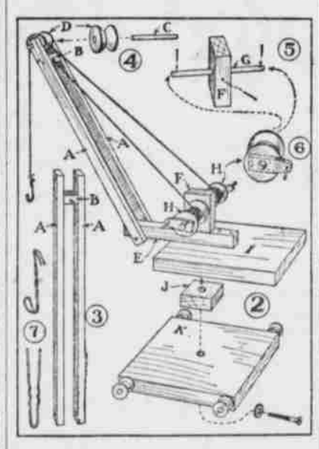


Fig. 2 shows details of the crane, windlasses and turntable, and Fig. 8 the cabin walls and roof. The crane boom is made of two strips (A, Fig. 3) 14 inches long, with a short block (B) fastened between, one and one-half inches from one end. Bore a one-fourth-inch hole through each strip near the upper end for the axle C (Fig. 4) to fit in, and a one-eighth-inch hole near the lower end through which to pivot the boom. Make the pulley of two spool ends nailed together (Fig. 4).

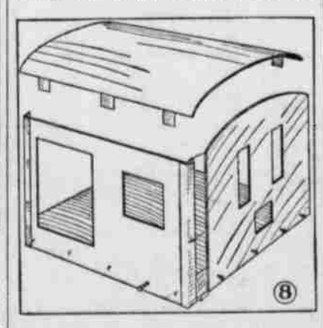
After completing the boom, cut beam E (Fig. 2) about eight inches long, to fit between strips A of the boom. Cut the windlass block F (Figs. 2 and 5), and bore a hole through it for a one-fourth-inch stick shaft (G) to run through. Make the windlass drums out of spools, with cranks tacked to their ends as shown in Fig. 6, and



after slipping them upon the shaft drive brads through the shaft ends to hold them on. Nail beam E to the lower edge of block F, then nail it to the turntable (I), a block five by eight inches in size. Center the beam in the width of the turntable, and allow three or four inches to project over the end, as shown in Fig. 2.

The turntable I is pivoted upon the base K, a block eight inches square, with a small block (J) inserted between them. Bore a one-fourth-inch hole through the center of base K and block J, so the screw pivot will turn freely, and slip an iron washer over the screw to keep its head from pulling through the holes.

Screw the lower ends of the boom sticks A to the end of beam E. Drive a nail into block B, attach one end



of a three-foot piece of cord to it, and tie the other end to one windlass. This is the cable by which the boom is raised and lowered. Use a cord five or six feet long for the hoisting cable, tie one end to the second windlass spool, run the cord over pulley D, and tie the other end to a hook bent out of a hairpin (Fig. 7). Fig. 1 shows how the windlasses are loced by loops of string.

Build the cabin of cardboard. Fig. 8 shows the front and one side. Cut the two long openings in the front for the cables to run through, and the square opening for beam E to fit in; and cut the square opening in the side of the right size and in the right place for the windlass spools to pass through (Fig. 1). There need be but one doorway. Tack the walls to the edge of the turntable, then bind together the corners with paper strips.

Make the tracks of strips just wide enough for the spool wheels to run upon, and connect them with cross-pieces.

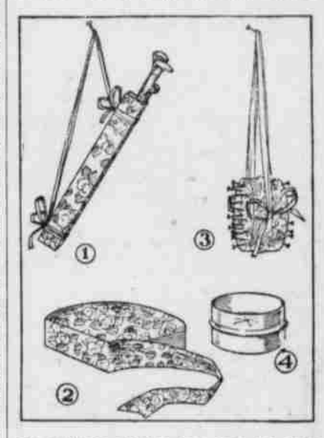
A DRESSER SET IN CRETONNE.

The hatpin receptacle in Fig. 1 requires a long, slender box such as hatpins are sold in. Sew or glue the cover on the box, cut off the end so the box will be several inches shorter than the hatpins, and cover with cretonne.

Figures 2 and 3 show two dainty pin-cushions. The square one is made of a small box cover, filled with sawdust, with a covering of cheesecloth fastened over the top.

The hanging pin-cushion (Fig. 2) requires two round pill boxes. Glue these together bottom to bottom, as shown in Fig. 4, then fill one at a time with sawdust, cover, and finish by sewing a band of cretonne about the edge of the boxes, and attaching a loop of ribbon to hang it by.

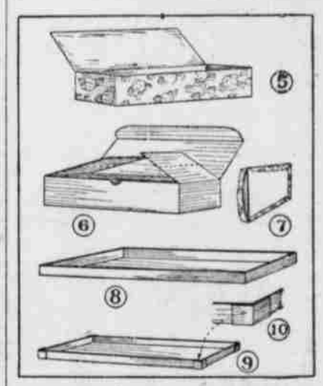
The glove box in Fig. 5 is made of a cracker box of the form shown in Fig. 6. First cut off the end flaps so they will be just long enough to turn down and fasten to the inside of the ends (see dotted lines in Fig. 6), and remove the flap on the lid. Cover



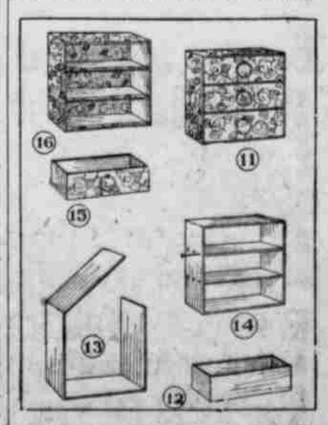
the outside of the box and lid with cretonne first; then cut pieces of cardboard to fit the inside, bottom, ends and side; cover these with padding and then with silk (Fig. 7), and glue in place.

Get the cover to a shoe box for the brush and comb tray shown in Fig. 8. Re-enforce the corners with pieces of cardboard folded and glued to them, as shown in Figs. 9 and 10. Then put on the cretonne covering. Cut one piece of the right size to fit the bottom of the cover and lap over the rim and on to the inside, then, after stitching this in place, cut a piece of cardboard to fit the bottom inside, cover it with cretonne (Fig. 7), and glue this covered piece to the inside of the cover. This completes the tray.

Figure 11 shows a dainty trinket chest with three drawers. After seeing how to construct it, you can make yours to contain as many drawers as



you wish. Small cardboard boxes form the drawers (Fig. 12). You can get empty spool boxes at a dry goods store. Pile one upon another and figure out the dimensions for the chest. Then fold a piece of cardboard as shown in Fig. 13, to make a case of the right size, and after bringing the folded ends together, bind them with a strip of paper (Fig. 14). Next cut strips of cardboard for shelves, and fasten these between the ends of the case by running pins through into their ends, as shown in Fig. 14. When the shelves have been adjusted properly, cover the back, ends, top and bottom of the case with cretonne (Fig



16), also the front of the drawer holes (Fig 15); and sew a fancywork ring to the center of the front of each drawer (Fig 11) by which to open them.